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Richard A. Marshack, solely in his capacity as Trustee of the LPG Liquidation Trust, files this complaint against Inlane Inc, a New York Corporation ("Defendant") and Does 1 through 20, inclusive, (collectively, "Doe Defendants"), and alleges as follows:

Statement of the Case

- 1. A bankruptcy trustee can avoid a debtor's fraudulent transfers of property. In this case, Trustee alleges that Debtor's insiders ("LPG Insiders") established one or more entities, including Vulcan Consulting Group LLC dba DRD and Prime Logix LLC (collectively, "Sham Entities"). The LPG Insiders then caused monies paid to and belonging to Debtor to be deposited in one or more accounts nominally titled in the name of Sham Entities. Such funds were not "transferred," as that term is defined in 11 U.S.C. § 101(54), to Sham Entities. Instead, the beneficial and equitable ownership of the funds always remained Debtor's property. The LPG Insiders took these actions to keep Debtor's cash outside the reach of creditors. At least \$80,607.14 of such funds belonging to Debtor were then transferred to Defendant. In addition, at least \$15,691.61 was transferred directly from Debtor to Defendant. The funds transferred to Defendant from the accounts nominally titled with Sham Entities and from the Debtor itself are collectively referred to as the "Transfers." Trustee alleges that some or all of the Transfers were then subsequently transferred by Defendant to one or more of the Doe Defendants. The Transfers to Defendant occurred during the four-year-period prior to the petition date.
- 2. Under these facts, the Trustee can avoid the Transfers and recover from Defendant as the "initial" transferee of such transfers and/or from Doe Defendants as "subsequent" transferees who did not take in good faith, for value, and without knowledge of the avoidability of such transfers. The Trustee alleges that neither the Defendant nor any of the Doe Defendants received the Transfers in good faith, for value, and without knowledge of their avoidability.

Statement of Jurisdiction and Venue

3. The Court has jurisdiction over this adversary proceeding pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 157 and 1334 in that this action arises in and relates to the bankruptcy case pending in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California, Santa Ana Division, entitled In re The 28 Litigation Practice Group, P.C., Bankruptcy Case Number 8:23-bk-10571-SC.

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- avoidance claims, were transferred to the LPG Liquidating Trust. Plaintiff brings these claims on This adversary proceeding is a core proceeding under 28 U.S.C. § 157(b)(2)(A), (B),
- (E), (H), and (O), and this Court has Constitutional authority to enter a final judgment on these claims. To the extent any claim for relief contained herein is determined not to be a non-core proceeding or a Stern-claim, Plaintiff consents to the entry of final judgment and orders by the Bankruptcy Court.
- 6. Venue properly lies in the Central District of California in that this adversary proceeding arises in or is related to a case under Title 11 of the United State Code as provided in 28 U.S.C. §§ 1408 and 1409.

Parties

- 7. The Litigation Practice Group P.C. (previously defined as "Debtor") is a corporation 16 organized under the laws of the State of California, that had its principal place of business in Tustin, California. During all relevant times prior to bankruptcy, Daniel S. March ("Mr. March") was the Chief Executive Officer of Debtor.
 - 8. On March 20, 2023 ("Petition Date"), the Debtor filed a voluntary petition under Chapter 11 of Title 11 of the United States Code, initiating bankruptcy Case No. 8:23-bk-10571-SC ("Bankruptcy Case") in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California, Santa Ana Division.
 - 9. Richard A. Marshack (previously defined as "Trustee" or "Plaintiff") was the dulyappointed, qualified, and acting Chapter 11 Trustee for the Debtor's bankruptcy estate ("Estate"). Pursuant to the confirmed Plan, the Trustee now serves as Trustee of the LPG Liquidation Trust, which now owns all of the litigation claims, including the Estate's avoidance actions.
- 10. Plaintiff alleges that, at all relevant times, Defendant was a domestic corporation 28 authorized to do business in the state of California and formed and existing under the laws of the

State of New York. Defendant's address and/or principal place of business is 16 Piper Dr, Albertson, NY 11507.

11. Plaintiff is ignorant of the true names and capacities of the Doe Defendants and, therefore, sues said defendants under such fictitious names. Plaintiff will amend this Complaint to reflect the true names and capacities of such defendant(s) when they have been ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that each of the fictitiously named individuals and/or entities are responsible in some manner for the occurrences alleged herein and proximately caused Plaintiff's damages by their conduct. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that the fictitiously named defendants may constitute individuals, unknown trusts, partnerships, related entities, owners, principals, shareholders, insiders, alter egos, co-conspirators, and aiders and abettors that: (a) received transfers from Debtor and/or Sham Entities as an initial, immediate, or mediate transferee; (b) received transfers from Defendant as a mediate transferee; (c) directed or controlled Defendant's conduct and, as such, were responsible in some manner for the occurrences alleged herein; and/or (c) were used to shield Debtor's assets from collection, levy or execution, and to otherwise, hinder, delay and defraud the Debtor and its creditors.

General Allegations

A. The Bankruptcy Case

- 12. Pre-petition, Debtor was a law firm that provided consumer debt resolution services to more than 50,000 clients nationwide.
 - 13. Tony Diab ("Mr. Diab") owned, operated, dominated and controlled the Debtor.
- 14. On May 8, 2023, Trustee accepted his appointment as the Chapter 11 Trustee in the Bankruptcy Case. To the extent that Trustee was not appointed until after any of the events alleged in this Complaint, the allegations are based on information and belief. *See Soo Park v. Thompson*, 851 F.3d 910, 928 (9th Cir. 2017); *Miller v. City of Los Angeles*, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 198871, at *5 (C.D. Cal. Aug. 7, 2014); *Mireskandari v. Daily Mail and General Trust PLC*, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 194437, at *4 (C.D. Cal. July 31, 2013).

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В. **Fraudulent Entities**

- 15. To keep Debtor's interests in property outside the reach of creditors, including funds paid by Debtor's clients pursuant to their written Legal Services Agreements with Debtor, the LPG Insiders created one or more sham entities to receive and hold Debtor's property.
- 16. The Debtor's primary assets were its rights to receive monthly ACH payments from its consumer clients. In the full year prior to bankruptcy, Debtor's Statements of Financial Affairs evidence that it received revenues totaling approximately \$155 million.
- 17. Under applicable state and federal laws, ACH pulls from a consumer's bank account can occur until the party initiating the payments obtains the consumer's express written consent.
- 18. With respect to the alleged Transfers, the consumer clients only consented to the Debtor initiating the payments from their accounts.
- 19. With respect to the alleged Transfers, the funds were derived from consumer clients that never consented to any law firm other than the Debtor representing them.
- 20. At all times, the Transfers constituted transfers of interests of the Debtor in property 15 as that term is defined in 11 U.S.C. § 101(54).

C. **Ponzi Scheme**

21. This Court has recognized that Debtor operated a Ponzi scheme by using funds provided by former investors to attract new investors hoping for very high returns. See Dk. No. 1545, fn. 5.

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¹ To the extent the LPG Insiders are adjudicated to be initial transferees of the Transfers, the omission of the LPG Insiders in this Complaint is not fatal to the fraudulent transfer claims set forth herein. See Erickson v. Leonard (In re AVI, Inc.), 389 B.R. 721, 735 (9th Cir. BAP 2008) ("[W]e hold that a trustee is not required to avoid the initial transfer from the initial transferee before seeking recovery from subsequent transferees under § 550(a)(2)."); IBT Intern., Inc. v. Northern (In re Int'l Admin. Servs., Inc.), 408 F.3d 689, 708 (11th Cir. 2005) ("Section 550(a) does not mandate a plaintiff to first pursue recovery against the initial transferee and successfully avoid all prior transfers against a mediate transferee."); Leslie v. Ace Gallery N.Y. Corp. (In re Art & Architecture Books of the 21st Century), 2021 Bankr. LEXIS 3637, *98 (Bankr. C.D. Cal. 2022) ("The language of 11 U.S.C. § 550 does not require a trustee to successfully avoid a transfer with respect to the initial transferee in order to recover from a subsequent transferee under 11 U.S.C. § 550."); In re M. Fabrikant & Sons, Inc., 394 B.R. 721, 743 (Bankr. S.D.N.Y. 2008) ("[T]he Bankruptcy Code, and specifically §§ 544(b) and 548, does not identify the proper, necessary or indispensable parties to a

fraudulent transfer action, and does not state that the initial transferee is necessary.").

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- 22. The Ponzi Scheme Presumption establishes a debtor's "intent to defraud future undertakers [investors] from the mere fact that a debtor was running a Ponzi scheme." Merrill v. Abbott (In re Independent Clearing House Co.), 77 B.R. 843, 860 (D. Utah 1987). "Knowledge to a substantial certainty constitutes intent in the eyes of the law, cf. Restatement (Second) of Torts § 8A (1963 & 1964), and a debtor's knowledge that future investors will not be paid is sufficient to establish his actual intent to defraud them." Id. A trustee in bankruptcy is not required to show that an operator of a Ponzi scheme was subjectively aware his Ponzi scheme was destined to fail. In re EPD Inv. Co., LLC, 114 F.4th at 1153 (9th Cir. 2024).
- 23. "[I]f all the debtor receives in return for a transfer is the use of the defendant's money to run a Ponzi scheme, there is nothing in the bankruptcy estate for creditors to share." *In re* Independent Clearing House Co. 77 B.R. at 859. In such a situation, the use of the defendant's money cannot objectively be called "reasonably equivalent value." *Id.* Therefore, "[t]he trustee can avoid the transfers if they were preferential or fraudulent. Transfers to investors in a Ponzi scheme are preferential and fraudulent. Therefore, they constitute 'property of the estate,' and the trustee can recover them." *Id.* at 853 n.17 (citations omitted).
- 24. Based on the Ponzi Scheme presumption the Court can infer that the Debtor had the 17 | intent to defraud investors within the meaning of 11 U.S.C. § 548(a)(1). Since the transfers by Debtor to third parties, including Defendants, were made with the intent to further the Ponzi scheme, the Debtor did not receive an objectively reasonable equivalent value for such transfers, and the Trustee can avoid any such transfers because they were preferential and/or fraudulent.

D. **Prepetition Creditors and Lawsuits**

- 25. Debtor's Schedule E/F, filed on April 4, 2023, as Dk. No. 33, lists: (a) 11 unsecured creditors with priority unsecured claims totaling \$374,060.04; and (b) 58 nonpriority unsecured creditors with scheduled claims totaling \$141,439,158.05.
- 26. The claims register in this Bankruptcy Case includes 2,554 proofs of claim, totaling in excess of \$424 million of claims asserted against the Estate.
- 27. At least 14 UCC-1 statements were of record securing alleged debts of the Debtor as of the Petition Date. These statements either reflected secured liens against the Debtor's assets then

28. Debtor's balance sheets for the 36 months ending December 31, 2021, show approximately \$17,900,000 in total assets at its highest point in November 2021. This amount is significantly less than the \$424 million of claims filed.

secured by UCC statements filed on or about September 15, 2021, and December 1, 2021.

29. Debtor's Statement of Financial Affairs, filed on April 4, 2023, as Dk. No. 34, reflects 15 pending lawsuits against Debtor as of the Petition Date. The lawsuits date back to October 18, 2021 (Fundura v. The Litigation Practice Group P.C. et al., Supreme Court of New York Index No. 613192-2021) and are as recent as March 10, 2023 (Diverse Capital LLC v. The 18 Litigation Practice Group P.C. et al., Supreme Court of New York Index No. 135614-2023).

Ε. **Debtor's Insolvency**

- 30. Debtor was insolvent when the Transfers occurred as evidenced by: (a) the 14 UCC-1 statements reflecting secured liens against the Debtor's owned and after-acquired assets and the assignment or sale of substantial portions of the Debtor's future income; (b) the priority and nonpriority unsecured debt of nearly \$142 million listed in Debtor's schedules; (c) the \$424 million of creditor claims filed in this Bankruptcy Case; and (d) Debtor's balance sheets reflecting, at its highest point, \$17.9 million of assets in November 2021.
- 31. Moreover, insolvency is presumed as a matter of law where, as in this Bankruptcy Case, the debtor operated a Ponzi scheme. See, e.g., Glob. Money Mgmt., L.P. v. McDonnold, ///

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4900-8689-3601,v.1

1	First Claim for Relief						
2	Avoidance, Preservation, and Recovery of Actual Fraudulent Transfer						
3	11 U.S.C. §§ 544, 550, 551; Cal. Civ. Code §§ 3439.04(a)(1) and 3439.07						
4	(Against all Defendants)						
5	39. Plaintiff incorporates by reference Paragraphs 1 through 38 and realleges these						
6	paragraphs as though set forth in full.						
7	40. Under 11 U.S.C. § 544(b)(1), Plaintiff may avoid transfers of an interest of Debtor						
8	which are voidable under applicable law by an unsecured creditor of Debtor, including under						
9	California Civil Code § 3439.04(a)(1).						
10	41. The Transfers were of property of Debtor.						
11	42. The Transfers were made within four years of the Petition Date.						
12	43. The Transfers were made with the actual intent to hinder, delay, or defraud Debtor's						
13	creditors.						
14	44. At the time each Transfer was made, Debtor was indebted to one or more creditors						
15	that held a claim against Debtor on the date of each Transfer and on the Petition Date.						
16	45. Debtor had been sued or threatened with suit before some or all of the Transfers						
17	occurred.						
18	46. Debtor incurred substantial debt shortly before or shortly after some or all of the						
19	Transfers occurred.						
20	47. The LPG Insiders caused Debtor to abscond and delay the discovery of substantial						
21	assets of the Debtor pursuant to the diversion of Debtor's funds, client files, and assets to multiple						
22	sham entities.						
23	48. Debtor actively concealed its beneficial interest in the Fraudulent Transfers and made						
24	the payments to Defendants with actual intent to hinder, delay, or defraud other creditors of the						
25	Debtor.						
26	49. Sham Entities, who benefitted from the receipt of funds improperly diverted away						
27	from Debtor, would be considered insiders under Cal. Civ. Code § 3439.04(b)(1).						
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Debtor did not receive reasonably equivalent value in exchange for the Transfers.

The Transfers were made at a time when Debtor was insolvent and/or rendered

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28 insolvent by virtue of said transfers.

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- The Transfers were made to Defendants with the actual intent to hinder, delay, or At the time each Transfer was made, Debtor was indebted to one or more creditors that held a claim against Debtor on the date of each Transfer and on the Petition Date. Debtor had been sued or threatened with suit before some or all of the Transfers Debtor incurred substantial debt shortly before or shortly after some or all of the
- The LPG Insiders caused Debtor to abscond and delay the discovery of substantial assets of the Debtor pursuant to the diversion of Debtor's funds, client files, and assets to multiple
- The LPG Insiders actively concealed Debtor's assets pursuant to the diversion of
- Sham Entities, who benefitted from the receipt of funds improperly diverted away from Debtor, would be considered insiders as that term is defined in 11 U.S.C. § 101(31).
- Debtor received less than reasonably equivalent value in exchange for the Transfers
- The Transfers were made at a time when Debtor was insolvent and/or rendered
- Plaintiff alleges that Defendant and/or Doe Defendants did not receive the Transfers in good faith, for value, and without knowledge of their avoidability.
 - Based on the foregoing, Plaintiff may avoid the Transfers under 11 U.S.C.
 - Based on the foregoing, Plaintiff may recover and preserve the avoided transfers up to the amount of the Transfers from Defendant and/or Doe Defendants as the initial transferee or, alternatively, as the subsequent transferee for the benefit of the Estate under 11 U.S.C. §§ 550 and 551.

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1		Fourth Claim for Relief						
2	Avoidano	ce, Preservation, and Recovery of Constructive Fraudulent Transfer						
3		11 U.S.C. §§ 548(a)(1)(B), 550 & 551						
4		(Against all Defendants)						
5	83.	Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference Paragraphs 1 through 38 and realleges						
6	these paragrap	ohs as though set forth in full herein.						
7	84.	One or more of the Transfers were made within two years before the Petition Date.						
8	85.	Debtor did not receive reasonably value in exchange for the Transfers.						
9	86.	The Transfers were made at a time when Debtor was insolvent and/or rendered						
10	insolvent by v	irtue of said transfers.						
11	87.	When the Transfers occurred, Debtor's business was undercapitalized and Debtor was						
12	engaged in bu	siness for which its capital was unreasonably small.						
13	88.	When the Transfers occurred, Debtor was about to incur debts that were beyond its						
14	ability to pay.							
15	89.	The Transfers were made for the benefit of Defendant and Sham Entities, which were						
16	insiders of De	btor.						
17	90.	At the time each Transfer was made, Debtor was indebted to one or more creditors						
18	that held a cla	im against Debtor on the date of each Transfer and on the Petition Date.						
19	91.	Plaintiff alleges that Defendant and/or Doe Defendants did not receive the Transfers						
20	in good faith,	for value, and without knowledge of their avoidability.						
21	92.	Based on the foregoing, Plaintiff may avoid the Transfers under 11 U.S.C.						
22	2 § 548(a)(1)(B).							
23	93.	Based on the foregoing, Plaintiff may recover and preserve the avoided Transfers						
24	from Defenda	nt and/or Doe Defendants as the initial transferee or, alternatively, as the subsequent						
25	transferee for	the benefit of the Estate under 11 U.S.C. §§ 550 and 551 from Defendant.						
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27	/ / /							
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		13						

COMPLAINT

4900-8689-3601,v.1

C	ase 8:25-ap-01043-SC
1	Fifth Claim for Relief
2	Disallowance of Claim
3	11 U.S.C. § 502(d)
4	(Against all Defendants)
5	94. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference Paragraphs 1 through 38 and realleges
6	these paragraphs as though set forth in full herein.
7	95. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant and/or Doe Defendants may have a claim against the
8	Estate.
9	96. Pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 502(d), Plaintiff requests that any claim asserted by
10	Defendant and/or Doe Defendants be disallowed unless or until the avoidable Transfers are repaid by
11	Defendant and/or Doe Defendants.
12	Prayer
13	WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendant and Doe Defendants as
14	follows:
15	On the First Claim for Relief
16	1. That the Transfers be avoided under 11 U.S.C. § 544 and Cal. Civ. Code
17	§§ 3439.04(a)(1) and 3439.07;
18	2. That Plaintiff recover the avoided Transfers or a money judgment in an amount equal
19	to the value of the avoided Transfers pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 550;
20	On the Second Claim for Relief
21	3. That the Transfers be avoided under 11 U.S.C. § 544 and Cal. Civ. Code
22	§§ 3439.04(a)(2), 3439.05 and 3439.07;
23	4. That Plaintiff recover the avoided Transfers or a money judgment in an amount equal
24	to the value of the avoided Transfers pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 550;
25	On the Third Claim for Relief
26	5. That the Transfers be avoided under 11 U.S.C. § 548(a)(1)(A);
27	6. That Plaintiff recover the avoided Transfers or a money judgment in an amount equal
28	to the value of the avoided Transfers pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 550;
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	COMPLAINT 4900-8689-3601,v.1

Filed 03/01/25 Entered 03/01/25 04:05:49

Case 8:25-ap-01043-SC

4900-8689-3601,v.1

Doc 1

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Exhibit "1"

Case 8:25-ap-01043-SC Doc 1 Filed 03/01/25 Entered 03/01/25 04:05:49 Desc Main Document Page 17 of 17

In re The Utigation Practice Group PC Disbursement Details by Payee 4 Years Pre-Petition (03/20/2019 - 03/20/2023)

inlane inc



ank Name	Account Name	Account Number St	tatement Date	Transaction Date Check Number	Debit/Charge	Мето
						WIRE 1YPE WIRE OUT DATEQ21 025 TIME1 158 ET 1RN 20221 02500341531 SERVICE REF 477285
Bank of America	Vulcan Consulting Group LI.C dba DRD	9551	10/31 /2022	10/25/2022	41,721.11	BNF IN LANE INC ID 727331073 BNF BKIPMORGAN CHASE BANK, N. 100002 PMT DET 41 0195290
Chase	The Litigation Practice Group PC	3158	11/30/2022	11/14/2022	15,691.61	Book Transfer Debit NC Inlane Inc Elmhurst NY 11373-1506 US Ret. Lead Purchase Tm 816080031810
						WIRE TYPEWIRE OUT DATE, 2301 20 TIME1 652 ET TRN202301 2000463428 SERVICE REF51 0397
ank of America	Prime Logix LLC	9201	1/31/2023	1/20/2023	38,886.03	BNF INLANE INC. ID 727331 073 BNF BKIPMORGAN CHASEBANK, N. 1D0002 PMT DET 42231 8622
Access to the second					96,298.75	

Payor Accounts BAT Inc., Coast Processing LLC, EZ Debt Relief, Maverick Management Group, Prime Logix, The Utigation Practice Group, Vulcan Consulting Group LLC

1 of 1